



Hybrid Town Meeting Study Committee

Date: Monday, November 27, 2023.

Time: 8:00 - 9:30 PM.

In-Person Location: Town Hall Annex 2nd Floor Conference Room.

Remote access: Zoom.

Minutes

Members in attendance (all remote):

Alex Bagnall, Kerrie Fallon, Peter Gast, Rebecca Gruber, Guillermo Hamlin, Sayed Khodier (Town Staff), Steve Storch.

Other attendees:

Greg Christiana, acting as chair for first meeting
Ryan Ferreira, member of the public

Meeting started at 8:20. Some attendees were delayed because Town Hall was locked, so we were not able to have a meet-in-person option for the meeting.

1. Introductions

Each committee member introduced themselves with a brief bio.

2. Nominations and election of officer(s) including Chair

Greg explained the roles and responsibilities of the chair and suggested other possible officers of the committee.

Discussion of chair workload, workload sharing, and responsibilities.

Guillermo nominated Alex, seconded by Peter

Alex nominated Rebecca, seconded by Peter

Peter moved that co-chairs be Alex and Rebecca, seconded by Steve

Voted on Alex and Rebecca to serve as co-chairs; unanimous vote of approval.

Discussed the taking of notes and the distribution of that responsibility.

3. Discussion of Committee's scope and timeframe of work

Reviewed the committee's enabling Article 2 from spring special town meeting 2023.

<start quote>

The recommended vote:

1. Committee Membership and Organization
- A. The Committee shall consist of no less than six (6) and no more than nine (9) members, the number to be determined and appointed by the Town Moderator, but a majority of whom should be current or former Town Meeting Members, and a member of Town staff appointed by the Town Manager as a non-voting member. Voting membership of the study committee shall reflect racial, ethnic, and other forms of diversity in Town Meeting.

- B. It is expected that the Study Committee will have access to and be able to consult with Town Counsel, the Town Information Technology Department, the Town Clerk, the Town ADA Coordinator, and any other Town departments and employees, who may have pertinent expertise to share with the Study Committee.
- C. The Town Moderator or their designee shall serve as chair of the committee for the purposes of the Committee's first organizational meeting, in which the Committee may elect officers as it deems appropriate.
- D. A majority of voting members of the committee at any given time shall constitute a quorum, and decisions shall be based on the vote of a simple majority of those committee members present and voting.

2. Committee Charge

The Committee is charged with comprehensively examining options and requirements for conducting Town Meeting with hybrid participation. For the purposes of this Committee, hybrid participation is defined as a combination of in-person and remote participation, where remote participation includes: deliberation, voting, calculation of quorum, or any combination thereof. The Committee's study shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. Identifying if any best practices by other town meetings in the conduct of hybrid meetings;
- B. Providing opportunities for public comment on the Committee's work;
- C. Identifying potential legal requirements, issues and constraints in conducting Town Meeting with hybrid participation;
- D. Identifying technical requirements, issues and constraints in conducting Town Meeting with hybrid participation, including estimates of the requisite monetary costs;
- E. Identifying potential new policies and procedures requisite for conducting Town Meeting with hybrid participation;
- F. Identifying the potential beneficial and detrimental effects of conducting Town Meeting with hybrid participation. Questions central to this inquiry include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. evaluating the impact of hybrid options on the functioning of Town Meeting as an effective and collegial body, and
 - 2. the potential for increased or decreased interest in serving as a Town Meeting Member for under-represented populations in Town Meeting;
- G. Supporting the implementation of relevant proposals as needed.

3. Committee Reports

The Committee shall make recommendations to Town Meeting, including:

- A. Providing information and updates to the Town Moderator as requested;
- B. If warranted, developing specific proposals for the implementation of Town Meeting with hybrid participation;
- C. Making reports of its progress, findings, and recommendations to every Annual Town Meeting until the Study Committee is dissolved.

4. Dissolution of the Study Committee

The Committee shall be dissolved by a vote of Town Meeting.

<end quote>

Discussion of the overall scope.

Steve re-capped the electronic voting selection and implementation process for Town Meeting.

Discussed that we are studying the idea of hybrid town meeting, but that it is not a foregone conclusion that Town Meeting will go hybrid.

Discussion of the upcoming survey to Town Meeting Members from the Moderator, which Greg said would go out in the next week or two. Suggested a question to gauge Town Meeting Members interest in a hybrid option, and how many nights of meeting that might use such an option.

Discussed researching other towns that are using hybrid, like Brookline and Lexington.

Discussed possibility of report for April's Town Meeting and overall committee schedule.

Discussed researching/talking to Michael Cunningham about the status of relevant state laws.

Discussed possible integration with ACMi

Discussed need for a "satellite" room if there is a hybrid possibility

Discussed Clicker company options/state of Town's contract with same

4. Discussion of public participation and outreach

Discussion of the need for a survey of town meeting members and beyond.

Interest in understanding barriers to participation in Town Meeting.

5. Scheduling of future meetings

Standing meeting night discussion, no conclusion.

Alex and Rebecca will send survey about meeting scheduling.

Next meeting: 7:30 PM Thursday Dec 14th. Remote and 2nd floor Town Hall Annex Conference room.

Peter will take minutes next time.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.